

Open-caption programs for deaf

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), in a precedent-setting decision, has given a Toronto cable television company permission to broadcast open-caption programming for the deaf.

The CRTC gave permission to Rogers Cable TV Ltd. to provide six to eight hours a week of programming on a special converter channel.

Open captions are decoded by the cable company and printed at the bottom of the television screen for deaf viewers. The service will help people in the Toronto area who do not have special \$350 decoding devices to decipher "closed captions" which are otherwise invisible on the screen.

Most of the programming will be geared to children "because captioning assists the deaf with language skills and we feel that's most important for children," said Sanderson Layng, director of the Deaf Television Resources Centre which is owned by Rogers.

Canada-Niger talks

Canada and Niger have agreed to study a number of projects which will contribute to the economic and social development of Niger in the next few years. Proposals for the projects were discussed during the visit of Niger's Minister of Planning Brah Mahamane, who headed a delegation to Canada for the seventh annual consultations between Canada and Niger on development co-operation, held in Ottawa, April 22-26.

Pierre De Bané, Minister of Regional Economic Expansion and adviser to the Secretary of State for External Affairs on Francophone Affairs, led the Canadian delegation to the meetings.

Mr. Mahamane also held talks with Minister of Transport Jean-Luc Pépin, Minister of State for Finance Pierre Busières and Minister of State for Small Business Charles Lapointe. In addition, Niger's Minister of Planning also met with Marcel Massé, President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and Michel de Goumois, Deputy Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs.

The representatives for the two countries said they wanted to join together to

help expand and develop relations between Canada and Niger, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

During the consultation on development assistance, the Canadian and Niger delegations examined projects already under way and discussed directions for future operations, focusing on three priorities: food self-sufficiency, the search for economic independence and the establishment of a developing society. The parties agreed to study projects in the agricultural, environmental and energy sectors. The Canadian representatives assured the Niger delegation that Canada would co-operate to help implement the studies.

Mr. Mahamane and the Niger delegation also visited the Salon de la Femme in Montreal where CIDA was hosting an exhibit of women in the Third World; Niger was one of the countries featured in this year's program.

Swiss minister makes visit

The head of the federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland Pierre Aubert made a visit to Canada, April 25 to May 2, at the invitation of Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan.

The meetings between the two foreign ministers focused on a number of bilateral and international questions of mutual interest including East-West relations and the Madrid Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.



Governor-General Edward Schreyer (right) speaks with Swiss head of the federal Department of Foreign Affairs Pierre Aubert.

The question of Canada's embargo on uranium shipments to Switzerland was also discussed. Since 1977, Canada has not allowed uranium to be shipped to Switzerland because of that country's refusal to provide guarantees required by Canada from all buyers of Canadian nuclear material and equipment.

During his visit to Ottawa, Mr. Aubert was received by Governor-General Edward Schreyer and met with Justice Minister Jean Chrétien.

The Swiss minister also opened "The Swiss Weeks" exhibition in Toronto and addressed the Swiss-Canadian Chamber of Commerce in that city. Mr. Aubert also spoke before the Swiss-Chamber of Commerce during a visit to Montreal.

Manpower shortages in mining

The federal government recently signed two agreements designed to help overcome a shortage of skilled workers in the mining industry.

Employment and Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy and Minister of State for Mines Judy Erola signed agreements with the Mining Association of Canada and the Coal Association of Canada.

The agreement with the Mining Association was the first on human resources planning with a major industrial association. Under the agreement the association will be linked with the National Job Bank of the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC). The bank, which opened last November, is a nation-wide telephone computer hook-up for the rapid matching of workers and jobs. The bank will allow the industry to take advantage of mobility assistance to locate employees in areas where jobs are located.

Besides helping skilled workers move to jobs, the agreement with the Mining Association also provides for assistance to mining firms in forecasting occupational demand and supply, wage rates and working conditions, availability of public labour market programs and utilization of non-traditional labour forces.

The agreement with the Coal Association of Canada establishes a framework leading to a survey and projection of employment requirements in the coal industry, and provides training in high-demand occupations. Under the agreement, the association will advise its members and the CEIC on ways to resolve manpower imbalances in the industry.